

Medications and Behavioral Challenges in Dementia

Lots of information---happy to discuss sources on request

Types of Dementia

- Alzheimer's
- Vascular
- Lewy Body/Parkinson's
- Lewy Body-like---PSP, Corticobasal Degeneration
- Mixed pathology with Advanced Age
- Alcohol
- Fronto-Temporal
- Others- HIV, Prion Disease, Huntington's
- Dementia Praecox
- MS—uncommon to have cognitive decline but happens
- TBI/DD---sort of

Common Behavioral Challenges in Dementia

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Poor PO intake
- Agitation
- Aggression
- Psychosis
- Yelling out

Medications Are Generally Not First Line Unless Indicated

- Medical Work UP
- Environmental Causes Addressed
- Behaviorally Manageable Problems Identified
- Reasons to Treat with Medication
 - Care impacted
 - Safety impacted
 - Patient distress

Unique Aspects of Treating Dementia Patients

- Elderly
 - Sensitive to meds
 - Medically challenged
 - Often medicinally challenged
 - Complex family dynamics
 - Often coexists with delirium
- Off Label Meds and/or Black boxed Warnings

Use with Caution in Dementia

- Anticholinergic
 - Tricyclic antidepressants, thiorazine, benadryl, cogentin
- Opioids
 - MS, fentanyl, oxycodone
- Sedative hypnotics
 - Ambien, benzodiazepines

Pharmacologic Treatments for Dementia

- ACE Inhibitors
 - Aricept, Exelon, Galantamine
- NMDA Inhibitors
 - Namenda

Psychiatric Medications Used In Dementia

- Anxiolytics
 - Ativan, Xanax ---benzodiazepines, Buspar
- Antidepressants
 - ---SSRI, SNRI, Remeron, Ritalin, Trazodone, Ketamine
- Antipsychotics---with approximate dosing equivalents
 - Haldol (1mg), Risperdal (1mg), Zyprexa (10mg), Seroquel (100mg), Nuplazid (34mg), Abilify (10mg)
- Mood Stabilizers
 - Depakote, Tegretol, Lamictal
- Nuedexta20/10

Typical Cases I See

- 74 year old DLB man up all night seeing dogs in room
- 90 year old CVA woman aggressive with care
- 58 year old Alzheimer woman thinks spouse having an affair
- 61 year old Alzheimer man seems depressed and apathetic
- 88 year old Parkinson woman is restless, anxious and cannot stop moving
- 69 year old CVA man yelling help help help continuously
- 101 year old is angry and derogatory to staff
- 70 year old alcoholic confused, staggering days after any alcohol
- 33 year old DD woman is scratching self
- 48 year old TBI man repetitively wiping mouth until it bleeds
- 51 year old Alzheimer woman is agitated and aggressive unless restrained, refractory to all meds, day 213 on med surg floor, family begging for sedation